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A possible solution for headaches during meditation Recently while traveling, I received an interesting request for assistance in the matter of a practitioner who was having trouble with "winds disease" in his head resulting in headaches that simply would not stop. The following is the advice I sent to him and it is interesting how some others were helped by this too. So, it seems reasonable to share this letter with more folks and see if it can help more who might find themselves in this situation. At the bottom of the page is the request for assistance. Hope this is useful.

With Metta.

Bhante V.

January 2006

Dhamma Greetings Simon,

I would like to share with you that I have experienced the same type of headaches and found out that it can be caused by possibly a couple of things. The first may be the hardest one for you to read about so please be patient. In Buddhism we have a basic moral code that we must follow, that being the five precepts. In a nutshell they are to abstain from killing or harming living beings on purpose, stealing, wrong sexual activity, telling lies and slander, and taking drugs or alcohol.

When one has done something in their past that they may feel guilty about, it can cause the meditator to try and push the memory down by using excessive energy and headaches arise because of that. For instance, I had a student in Malaysia who when she was young got pregnant and had an abortion. She carried this guilty feeling around with her for many years and every time she tried to meditate she got big headaches. Finally, she came to practice with me and I told her that she had a big secret and needed to let go of it. Finally she told me about the abortion and then she was able to meditate without any more problems. So, possibly you have a secret that needs to be let go of. It is best to do this in person with a friend or teacher that you trust. If this is the problem when you tell your friend or teacher the relief will be immediate.

If you have the time to come visit me at our center in Missouri, I can show you how to meditate without having any tension or tightness arising anywhere in your mind or body. I will be traveling around the country until the end of March (2006). So if you can come and visit for a week or so anytime from April until October I will be able to help you. For more information about the center please look it up at www.dhammasukha.org. As you may or may not know the way that I teach meditation is by following the instructions given in the original suttas given to us by the Buddha.

Many different types of meditation are what we call "absorption concentration" types of meditation. But I teach what is called "tranquility meditation" which is quite different and has different end results than the absorption type of meditation. I have never had anyone who followed the instructions (in the way I give them) have any trouble with headaches at all.

For you right now, I would suggest that you stop meditating and practice your generosity with everyone around you. By this I mean practicing in generous thoughts, generous speech and generous actions. You will find that this will cause happiness to arise in you more often. Also, begin to carry around a smile on your face wherever you go.

I hope this has been of some help and that you will consider come to our center in the forests of Missouri for a while. I do wish you well and hope that your meditation brings peace and happiness to you always.

Maha-Metta 2U
always
Bhante Vimalaramsi
Dhammasukha Meditation Center
Annapolis, MO
BhanteV4u@yahoo.com

email your questions to: sisterkhema@dhammasukha.org

The above answer was sent based on the request for assistance below that we received:

Dear Venerable Bhante U Vimalaramsi,

Please can you help me, I am actually a practitioner from another Buddhist tradition. I was very impressed when reading some off your instruction on your web site.

I have been a Buddhist practitioner for 3 and a half years now. Unfortunately for three of them I have been suffering from wind disease in my head, it all started about three years when I was very enthusiastic about meditation, I would meditate for too long and push for results and over- concentrating.

Unfortunately since then my meditation practice and study have been extremely difficult and challenging as I have a lot of discomfort and pain whilst meditating which often leads to bad headaches. Mostly it feels like I'm meditating with an iron cage in my head.

It started off that I would get pressure in my forehead, then that pressure turned into a band of pressure around my head. Recently it has manifested itself as pressure like two prongs stabbing me in the side of the head, and my nerves seem to twitch in the sides of my head which is very uncomfortable. i have always found it extremely difficult to centre my mind, my mind always just seems stuck in my head!

I tried using some of your instructions, i was OK for a week and then the discomfort came back again. I

am a Mahayana practitioner, I have read lots and lots on wind disease and have had lots of advice from teachers in my tradition but nothing ever seems to work.

I was wondering if you could help me as your meditation advice did seem to help me and I feel a close karmic connection with you. I try to practice patient acceptance but sometimes it can become extremely intense, it seems I have some heavy negative karma!

Best Wishes

Simon

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